



# **Build the wall! Village fortification, its timing and triggers in southern Maluku, Indonesia**

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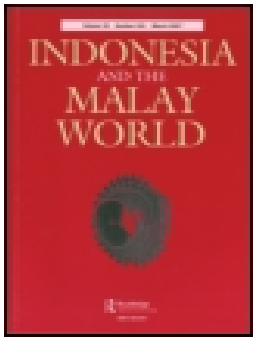
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# Village fortification, its timing and triggers in southern Maluku, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

The physical remains and extensive historical documentation of fortified settlements across a large swathe of southern Maluku has gone unnoticed by scholars. On the basis of historical accounts and images, I have constructed a detailed picture of the 'southern Maluku village fortification pattern' which was once typical of settlements in the region. Using evidence from language, I show that stone building was an indigenous tradition in the southeastern corner of Indonesia which subsequently was extended to stone fortifications around villages, which spread across southern Maluku. I suggest that the fortification of settlements was triggered here in the first half of 17th century by a climate of fear arising from the 1621 Banda massacre perpetrated by the Dutch.

### KEYWORDS

fortification; linguistic diffusion; Moluccas; settlement patterns; VOC

## Introduction

The volume *Inventory and identification of forts in Indonesia* (Pusat Dokumentasi Arsitektur 2010) surveys the remains of fortified structures across the Indonesian archipelago. In central Maluku, more than three dozen European-built forts and just one native fort are listed. The work also identifies five fortified structures in southern Maluku, of which three were built by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the mid to late 17th century. The remaining two fortifications are identified as native-built, but no information is provided about when they were built or what they were used for. The apparent, but perhaps unintentional, concentration on the forts of Europeans means that the numerous archaeological remains of indigenous fortifications across the whole swathe of southern Maluku have been overlooked. In this article, I draw attention to what I will term 'the southern Maluku village fortification pattern' that is amply documented in the historical record, but whose omission from studies of fortifications has denied history to people who are not without history.

Fortifications of many different types began to be built widely across Indonesia by indigenous peoples, typically, where strong autochthonous states were established from the 16th century (Reid 1993: 88; Knaap 2002: 265). Whilst most fortifications were built in

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order to protect settlements (Pusat Dokumentasi Arsitektur 2010: 27–28), whole settlements were rarely fortified; hill top fortifications or citadels were more common. Yet, in the southern Moluccan islands from Kei to Kisar and taking in the western-most parts of Aru and the far eastern tip of Timor, stone walls fortifying whole villages are found in great numbers (Figure 1).

In this article, I contend that fortified settlement building was a regional phenomenon that spread across southern Maluku. There are striking similarities across this region in the stone walls fortifying villages, the words used for them, and the ways in which they were utilised and conceptualised. Using descriptions and images from the historical record, I outline the distribution of fortified settlements and paint a picture of their construction and function. Using evidence from language, I show that the term #lutuR, denoting a wall built up from stones, shows signs of borrowing across the region. This indicates that stone wall building itself, along with the vocabulary for it, diffused across the region. I suggest that as one group built a wall around its village, their neighbours were prompted to protect themselves in a similar way. The endemic culture of warfare meant that there was a strong compulsion to adopt village fortifications, thus creating the particular concentration of stone village fortifications, attested to in historical accounts and physical remains, of which many are still visible across the region today.

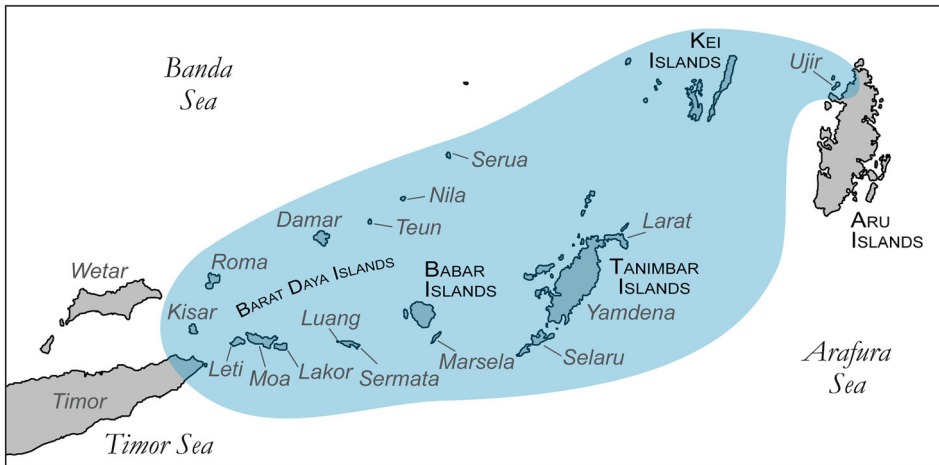
Despite the indigenous character of the stone building tradition of southern Maluku, the evidence points to the early 17th century as the time in which fortification of villages began in the area. European naval aggression likely played a role in the fortification process, since it was at this time that the Dutch sought to reinforce their trade monopoly by bringing all islands of southern Maluku under their control. I show that the VOC archives give us a picture of the climate of fear around Dutch activities in the aftermath of the Banda massacre in 1621. With the fortification of settlements beginning in the first half of the 17th century, there is a likely causal relationship between fortification and the activities of the Dutch in southern Maluku.

## Historical descriptions of fortified settlements in southern Maluku<sup>1</sup>

Southern Maluku was frequented by Europeans in search of spices and other valuable goods from at least the 17th century and is described by numerous visitors from that time well into the 20th century. Numerous written and pictorial sources depict the fortified villages in the different island groups of southern Maluku. As this section will show, the historical record provides a picture of the extent and function of stone fortifications around villages and makes clear the commonalities shared across southern Maluku settlements. Most sources available on them come from the late 19th and early 20th century. In the first decades of 20th century, village fortifications rapidly became obsolete, as the Dutch colonial powers increasingly exercised control and imposed stability on the islands.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In the following sections quotes from Dutch and German are provided in translation. Unless otherwise noted, translations of Dutch and German texts are my own. The reader is referred to the cited source for the original text.

<sup>2</sup>Fortified villages in the eastern Timor region are not discussed here; there are few historical documents covering the region before the 20th century (Lape 2006). Unlike the forts of southern Maluku, however, there has been archaeological investigation of these sites and the languages of the communities in the areas around them have been documented. As such, I return to the eastern Timor area when discussing the dispersal and dating of fortifications.



**Figure 1.** Area of southern Maluku and eastern Timor where fortified villages were concentrated.

### Kei islands

Throughout the Kei islands, villages were once surrounded by sizeable stone fortifications topped with hidden gates accessible only via steep ladders:

The form of these fortifications is everywhere the same. Four strong, thick walls, each 50 to 100 metres long, surround a square enclosure. Each wall has at its centre a concealed entrance with stairs, except where a steep adjacent slope makes approach impossible. The ancestors of the Kei people have provided them with prodigious works of this kind, assembling huge blocks of stone into walls a fathom thick and metres in height.

(Geurtjens 1921a: 270)

In times of war, the walls would be raised with bamboo, and the gates barricaded, and *lila* (a type of canon) put in place (Riedel 1886: 225).

Fortified villages were found widely in the Kei islands by the middle of the 19th century. The resident of Amboina, J.G.F. Riedel, in his wide-ranging work (1886) on the people of Maluku and beyond, describes villages in Kei located in inaccessible places surrounded by walls made of coral blocks:

With a few exceptions on the islands of Nuhujuut and Nuhutut, the villages of the Kei archipelago are located on the coast in places where water is available. In the past, people say, ... they were built on mountain tops and high cliffs, for fear of enemy attack. ... The villages, the biggest of them containing 60 houses, are surrounded by thick coral stone walls (*lutur, wat lutur*).

(Riedel 1886: 225; my emphasis)

By the beginning of the 20th century much of the stone fortification around villages had been removed. In his visit in 1908, the German naturalist Hugo Merton found the fortifying walls with steep ladders for entry still in use in a few villages of the mountainous interior (see Figure 2).

Halfway up we came to a mountain village surrounded by a stone wall several metres high; at the point of entry stood two wide ladders on either side of the wall. The interior space was divided by lower walls, 1 to 1.5m high, into rectangular courtyards belonging to the individual houses.

(Merton 1910: 186)



**Figure 2.** Layers of stone walls leading up to the gate of a fortified village in the mountains on Kei Besar. Hugo Merton (1910), photo taken in 1908.

Little more than a decade later, the Dutch missionary Geurtjens describes the village fortifications as a thing of the past on the Kei islands:

In the past, by contrast, the state of war was the norm and the villages were adapted to this situation. Today, peaceful villages can be seen nestling among the greenery in the finest locations along the coast. Formerly, they could be found only in the most inaccessible places. It was the steepest of slopes, the most jagged of cliffs, and the grimmest of gorges that made a site suitable for the location of a village. Every village was a fortress, and everybody desired to build a stronghold that would keep the most formidable enemy out.

(Geurtjens 1921a: 270)

As noted above by Geurtjens, the past state of perpetual warfare between villages was seen to have necessitated the fortifications. Riedel gives an example of the flimsy grounds that would lead to war between villages and describes the ritualised way in which the path to war was paved:

The reasons for wars are: appropriation of land, insult, and adultery between inhabitants of different villages, including cases in which a woman who has married into a strange village is insulted there and sends to her blood relatives a *benaat meak* or token of disgrace, consisting of a little *kabus* (seed fluff of the *Eriodendronan fruticosum*) and some *manu wuun* (chicken feathers), wrapped in a piece of old linen. When a village has decided to wage war, *ravuun*, its chief sends the chief of the other village a piece of *gaba-gaba* (palm leaf) called a *banaat karvevan*, in the form of a sword. If the opposite party does not accept the challenge, the *gaba-gaba* is returned. But if the other village wants war, a machete is sent back in its place.

(Riedel 1886: 233)

Against this background of readiness to warfare, village walls would have played an important role. Being near indestructible to a native force, they would have meant that very little life would be lost in a conflict. Indeed, the people of Kei viewed the walls as living entities that, although not demanding, required tending lest their wrath be awakened:

In Kei war craft and history, there is no mention of the destruction or capture of such fortifications. ... It was in fact impossible to take one using Kei weapons. The walls were guardians on whom one could depend for one's safety. No wonder, then, that the thoroughly animistic Kei people viewed their defensive wall as an animated being, a living protector, who furthermore, provided accommodation for the protecting spirits of the tribe. The wall itself was not terribly demanding, and it did not require sacrifices, but if one dared to breach or damage it, then there would be reason to fear its revenge.

(Geurtjens 1921a: 271–272)

Geurtjens (1921a) recounts that the process of removing walls as part of Dutch pacification precipitated predictions of pestilence now that villages had been ‘murdered’ and ‘unclothed’:

Smallpox, plague and famine would devour the spirits of the wrongdoers, for they had murdered the old walls, destroyed the homes of the spirits: they had stripped their village, torn up its sarong and left it naked and disgraced before the whole world ... (Geurtjens 1921a: 272)

### ***Aru islands***

Unlike Kei, village fortification was not extensive in Aru. Riedel (1886) notes that, aside from the Dutch-built fort and the attached village of Wokam, there were only two villages with stone fortifications in the Aru islands in the 19th century: Fangabel and Ujir. From as early as the mid 17th century these two villages were in alliance with one another and acted as intermediaries for trade between the eastern side of Aru with its dense forests populated with bird of paradise, and rich seas plentifully supplied with pearls and tortoiseshell (Schapper 2018). Fangabel is no longer inhabited; we have no historical descriptions of the village and there has been no archaeological investigation of the site. By contrast, Ujir stands out in writings on Aru for the vast complex of stone ruins that it is home to.

The first visitor account of the stone structures in Ujir comes from the Dutchman Kolff on his visit in 1825. In particular, he describes the ruins of a stone wall that appeared at one time to have surrounded the village:

During our stay here, I inspected the environs of the village and saw some former fortifications, the remains of which show that they must once have been very extensive. We also saw traces of a long street, lined by walls, running from the east to the west through the whole village. Here and there we also saw many ruins of stone houses.

(Kolff 1828: 233)

Almost two decades later, Brumund was equally impressed by Ujir's ruins on his visit in 1843. He also observed the high wall around the village and the stone houses overgrown with plants:

The village is ringed by a stacked coral stone wall 6 to 8 feet in height, within which still other walls are to be found. There are also some stone houses, all of which are however in ruins, overgrown with bushes and plants. Among these stand the currently occupied



houses with their *gaba-gaba* roofs, such that the whole scene resembles the ruins of an ancient city that was laid to waste, among which some vagrants have set up camp. These ruins plainly show, as people also confirmed to me, that Ujir was once much richer and more populous.

(Brumund 1845: 82–83)

Merton also remarked on the extensive stone rubble on his visit to Ujir in 1908. Like Brumund before him, Merton observed not just ruins but also noted that there were many stone walls in use in Ujir village similar to those he saw in Kei:

The village was itself surrounded by stone walls, and in many cases, the land belonging to a house was also demarcated from the neighbouring one by walls, just as we later often saw on the Kei islands.

(Merton 1910: 166)

The origins of these, at least partially ruined stone walls, observed in the 19th and 20th centuries appear to have been a network of fortifications around Ujir village. These fortifications were encountered by Dutch military forces that attacked Ujir in 1789 as in reprisal for an assault on the Dutch fort on nearby Wokam. The expedition's commander, Adrianus Anthony 's Gravessande, failed to take the village, explaining in his report that the heavy village walls along with Ujir guns, booby-traps and entry point barricades could not be assailed:

The matter would have been concluded most favourably, if the Alfurs and Backshore people, who appeared in large numbers and joined us, had dared to fight and not been too afraid not only of the enemy (had they been in the forests and fields, [the Alfurs and Backshore people] would have undertaken to haul them out from there!), but also of the guns and strong fortifications (*benteng*) with which the Ujir have amazingly strengthened their village, a settlement which nature has helped so extraordinarily [due to its protected position inside an inlet] ...

Afterwards our people attacked the negeri Ujir for the second time with some fervour, and bore down on the *benteng* so strongly that they shot the Ujir Jaffoera, son of the *orangkaya* of Fangabel Abdul, [and] pulled him from it and took his head; [they] subsequently scaled the second and the third of the previously mentioned *benteng*. Some of the enemy fell, among them one person was seen withdrawing to the temple who, judging from his clothing and circumstances, was thought to be their so-called king, Manoeffa who is [Prince] Nuku's brother. On this occasion, none of our people fell but several were wounded. Meanwhile, the caltrops with which the land was littered, the blocking of the roads with felled trees, and the particularly sly damming up of the inlet created many obstacles for our men.

Further circumstances meant that the enemy was in an advantageous position. Other apparent dangers forced us not to go any further, but rather retreat so that the ships were strewn with suffering, wounded men in no condition to go on to Goram, but who instead had to return [to Banda].<sup>3</sup>

The Dutch launched two further expeditions against Ujir, eventually taking the village (TNI 1858). As part of the terms of peace in 1793, the Ujir were forced to dismantle all but the most essential of their fortifications (Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen 1874). One of the most significant *lutur* that remained was that which formed the base of the old mosque (Figure 3). The archaeological teams that visited Ujir suggest this wall was a re-purposing of an original fortified structure (O'Connor et al. 2007; Handoko 2016).

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<sup>3</sup>VOC 3864. Many thanks to Hans Hägerdal for sharing this document and his transcription of it.





**Figure 3.** The thick, more than two metre high *lutur* (stone wall), that made up the base of the mosque of the old Ujir village and which doubled as a fortification, located strategically at the water's edge © Emilie T.B. Wellfelt, 2015.

### **Tanimbar islands**

Numerous visitors were impressed by the heavily fortified villages of the Tanimbar islands. Accounts of stone walls in Tanimbar include the main island of Yamdena as well as the islands of Selaru, Larat and Fordata. Riedel describes the fortifications around Tanimbar villages as follows [my emphasis]:

On the islands of Yamdena and Selaru, fear of enemy attacks means that villages are built by deliberately on the peaks of raised coral rocks, up to 120 metres above sea level. Here access is provided by heavy wooden ladders (*ret*) about two metres in width. In times of war, these ladders are dismantled and stored in the village. These villages, the largest of which contains 80 big wooden houses standing on piles two to three metres high, are surrounded by heavy walls (*lutur*) of stacked coral stones, and further protected by palisades of thorny bamboo, while on the seaward side they are usually shielded by *Pisonia alba* trees.

(Riedel 1886: 285)

Extensive village fortifications were necessitated by the perpetual state of warfare that existed between villages in Tanimbar. Successive travellers observed the near constant fighting on the island of Larat in northern Tanimbar. The British naturalist Henry Forbes stayed in the village of Ritabel in 1882 and encountered many signs of endemic violence:

The next sight was less exhilarating- on a tree-clad elevation the half-burned and recently deserted village of Ridol; and from the branch of a high tree before us a human arm, hacked out by the shoulder-blade dangled in the breeze, and at no great distance further were recently gibbeted human heads and limbs.

A state of war, we found, existed between, on the one hand, the villagers of Ridol burnt out by the Kaleobar people, leagued with Waitidal on the north-western corner, which had taken them in, and with Ritabel, our village; and on the other hand, those of Kaleobar, one of the largest villages on the island situated on the north-eastern corner, which was leagued with Kelaan and with Lamdesar, two other villages on the south-eastern coast. [...] Frequent

raids had been made recently by these villages on Ritabel, the wife of whose chief had recently been picked off from the outside of the palisade by a lurking Kaleobar marksman, while many of the villagers showed us their recent wounds received in an attack made a few weeks before our arrival.

(Forbes 1885: 304)

A decade later warfare between the villages on Larat seemed not to have reduced. Johan Jacobsen (1896: 209) did not witness the warfare but reported from one Captain Langen that the village of Ridol had once again been laid to waste.

The resident of Ambon J.H. de Vries describes the villages of the Tanimbar as still having ‘a fortress-like appearance’ at the beginning of the 20th century. He presents a detailed description of the fortifications around the village of Lermatangkort:

It is built on a high rock plateau, with sharp drops on all sides. From the shore in particular, it is unscaleable, so a tall wooden staircase or ladder consisting of several sections is installed. In wartime these sections are hauled up, completely severing the link with the outside world. The ladder leads to a gate which provides access to the village. The gate is set in a wall of stacked stones, surmounted by a fence of thick, upright bamboo with spiked tips. Cross-beams reinforce the whole structure. The gate itself is so narrow that only one person can pass through at a time. Opposite it on the landward side is a second gate, also with a ladder. These two gates are the only ways into the village.

(de Vries 1900: 494)

Shortly after this, the traditional pattern of village fortification declined. The Catholic priest Peter Drabbe (1940: 48) describes the walls and the wars that necessitated them as a thing of the past:

The gate gives access to the village which is enclosed within a wall about two metres high. The wall consists of stacked reef stones. Its remains can still be seen in many places. There are no more complete walls, because, when the Government abolished warfare, the order was given to demolish them. ... In the past they served to keep enemies outside, and pigs inside.

We see a dramatic decline in fortification when comparing images of the village of Omtufu. Drabbe’s photograph of the village when he was stationed in Tanimbar from 1915 (Figure 4) shows the old stone wall reduced to rubble and without gates. The same village photographed in 1903 shows bamboo palisaded gates with guards standing off to the left (Figure 5). The gates of Ritabel were similarly palisaded and surrounded by bamboo caltrops which Forbes observed at a period of ongoing war:

All around the village we found a high strong palisade, with a portion removable, however, on the shore side in the daytime. In attempting to go out by the landward gateway we were at once restrained by several of the villagers following us, who pointed to the ground in an excited manner, demonstrating to us its surface everywhere set with sharpened bamboo spikes, except along a narrow footpath. Their gestures instantly opened our eyes, with an unpleasant shock, to the truth that we were environed by enemies, and the village was standing on its defence.

(Forbes 1885: 303)

Still, Drabbe (1940) was able to record beliefs and rituals for the protective stone walls before these fell into disuse. As in Kei, a village’s stone walls were regarded by the Tanimbar as living entities that needed to be provisioned:



**Figure 4.** Remains of the stone wall around Omtufu village, Yamdena, Tanimbar Islands, circa 1920, by Petrus Drabbe © KITLV 404606.



**Figure 5.** One of the entry gates to Omtufu village, Yamdena, Tanimbar islands), circa 1903, shown in use with palisading of sharpened stakes and two guards standing on the left of the gate © KITLV 82675.

After the construction of such a village wall, a sacrificial feast was also held, involving a communal meal for the whole kampong together with offerings of food first to the wall, then to the village itself, and finally to God. Before everyone began to eat (a large meal of rice with pork), the head of the village founder's lineage group took a portion of rice with a strip of pork fat, *babi dolas*, on top, and placed it on the wall on the seaward side of the village, saying: 'Wall, we have finished stacking you up, do not let your weight press upon us.' Then a portion was placed on the ground in the village, on the seaward side of the dancing and gathering place, and the village sacrificer said to God: 'Friend (the term by which sacrificers and village criers address the Supreme Being), we have fed the wall and

the village, keep the weight of the stone from us.' Thereupon the whole community repeated the prayer of the sacrificer. (Drabbe 1940: 49)

### **Babar islands**

Like their larger and better described neighbours, the Babar islands are known to have been home to villages fortified with stone walls. As always, Riedel provides a clear statement on the extent and type of fortification around villages:

Most villages [on Babar itself] (*let* or *lehol*) are set on high ground above the sea, surrounded by a stone wall (*lutur*) two to three metres high, up to two metres wide.

(Riedel 1886: 342; my emphasis)

The most detailed description of the fortifications on the Babar islands are from after they were no longer use (e.g., van Dijk and de Jonge 1987). The anthropologist Toos van Dijk describes the protective *lutur* that traditionally surrounded villages on Marsela, the southernmost island of the Babar group, on the basis of oral traditions:

In elevated places, we still see the remains of early villages of Marsela which were inhabited by various *em* [house or lineage group] until the beginning of the twentieth century. A village (*lek* or *run*) was really a kind of fort designed to fend off an enemy. The people lived under constant threat of war. Remains of the ring wall which surrounded the village are still present, often with shooting holes still visible. According to informants, this wall [whose personal name was] *Wawyèlya*, was at least four metres high, and one to one and a half metres thick. Bamboo stakes were fixed on top of the wall to make it even more difficult for an enemy to enter the village. ... A gate, *worrey*, was equipped with large wooden doors that gave access to the village.

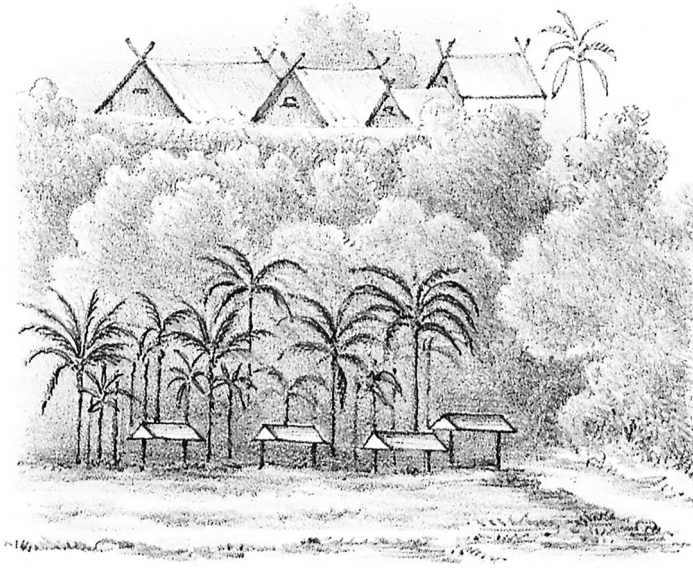
(van Dijk 2000: 159)

Van Dijk (2000: 171) also describes the significance of the village walls. As in the Kei islands, the walls were conceived as a cloth that was wrapped protectively around the village. When denuded, life would flow away from the village.

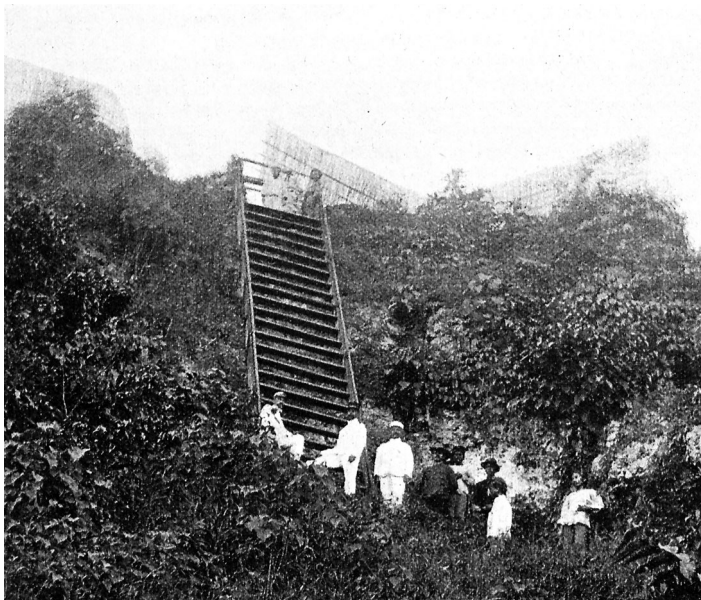
A contemporaneous account of the stone walls around villages in Babar comes from a Dutch military expedition to subdue unruly villages on Babar in 1907 which found villages heavily armed against attack. The anonymous author of a report published in the popular contemporary magazine *Eigen Haard* (1907) writes of the great surprise they experienced encountering walls that were 'built of stone 2 m high and topped with a 2 m high bamboo fence with stakes in between' (1907: 795). The force was also warned by the *posthouder* [local Dutch official] that booby traps of caltrops and other pitfalls were around stone walls (1907: 794). In the villages of Babar they encountered a large number of guns, with each village yielding up dozens of rifles. The authorities saw these as unnecessary given the absence of large dangerous animals on the islands, and confiscated them. Pacification was further imposed by giving troublesome villages a few weeks to move out of their inaccessible walled villages to the coast, where they would be less likely to resist 'company' rule, as the locals still called at the time.

Despite there being little contemporaneous description of the walls of protecting villages on the Babar Islands, there are a surprising number of images of them. Riedel (1886) gives an early depiction of a traditional village, showing it nestled high behind protecting walls (Figure 6). The 1907 expedition also captured the difficult access to villages due to the steep ascents which led up to the walled villages (Figure 7).





**Figure 6.** A view of the village on Watweci (now known as Watuweï), Dawelor, Babar islands (Riedel 1886).



**Figure 7.** The landward gate of Wakpapapi with a steep ladder leading up to the palisaded stone wall, on one of the Babar islands (*Eigen Haard* 1907: 797).

The German linguist and ethnographer, Wilhelm Müller-Wismar, visited the islands in 1913 and took photos of fortifications around villages, particularly on the island of Marsela, that show striking similarities with those described for other parts of southern Maluku. [Figure 8](#) shows a stone wall, the height of a man, with steep steps leading up to a gate



**Figure 8.** Gate over the stone wall of Lawawang village, Marsela, Babar islands, 1913, by Wilhelm Müller-Wismar © MARKK / Dr. Wilhelm Müller-Wismar Gedächtnis-Stiftung.

with wooden doors; stakes are embedded at the top of the walls, presumably for attaching palisades in times of war. [Figure 9](#) shows another village surrounded by a stone wall topped with an extensive bamboo palisade and reinforced with piles of logs stacked on the wall. These images show that, although pacification had begun at least in 1907 on the Babar islands, the traditional fortified village pattern persisted beyond that for some time.

### ***Leti and Luang island groups***

Located in the southeastern corner of southern Maluku directly adjacent to Tutuala on the eastern tip of Timor, the islands of Leti, Moa, Lakor, Luang, and Sermata are also recorded



**Figure 9.** Stone wall palisaded with bamboo around Latalola village, Marsela, Babar islands, 1913, by Wilhelm Müller-Wismar © MARKK / Dr. Wilhelm Müller-Wismar Gedächtnis-Stiftung.

as having their traditional villages fortified. Riedel describes the walls as imposing structures of considerable height and thickness with similar palisades and gates as found in other island groups:

Most villages are located on isolated knolls or outcrops of coral stone, 20 to 50 metres above sea level, and surrounded by a stone wall, *lutru*, three metres tall and one metre thick with two to four entrances or gates, which are closed in times of danger.

(Riedel 1886: 379; my emphasis)

Around each village on [on Luang and Sermata] there is a stone wall, *lutru*, 2.25 metre in height and 2 metre thick. Entry is via two gates, one at the front and one at the rear. The majority of villages are located close to the sea but at some elevation, and where possible in the vicinity of a water source. In the past, bamboo fortifications and caltrops, *hoora*, were placed around them in time of war.

(Riedel 1886: 317–318; my emphasis)

It is from the islands in this group that we have the earliest account of village fortification given by Ernst Christoph Barchewitz, a German in the VOC. He was stationed on Leti island between 1714 and 1720 and his travelogue of 1751 provides the first depiction of a stone wall surrounding a village in southern Maluku (Figure 10).

He describes the walls as ubiquitous due to the perpetual state of war between villages:

Directly to the east ... , surrounded by a strong wall, was the village of Leyduttun. All the villages of Leti had such walls for their protection, because the local rulers were always at war with one another. These walls were made of large flat stones, and provided with holes for shooting. Neither chalk nor lime was used in their construction, the dry stones simply being placed on top of one another.

(Barchewitz 1730: 212–213)

Fortification continued to be a prominent feature of Leti and Moa in the 19th century. Bosscher (1854: 436) reflected that the villages there ‘could almost be called small forts,





**Figure 10.** A walled village on Leti at the top right-hand corner of the frontispiece to Barchewitz (1751).

unassailable to an indigenous enemy'. And in the early 20th century de Vries (1900) remarked on the strange walled villages of Leti, similar to those on Tanimbar:

Toetoeikai and Lehoelele are the strangest villages one can imagine. Here are the same fortresses that I had already seen on Tanimbar, but now with the difference that having entered through the gate, one sees nothing but walls! The only access to the village, which is perched on a rock plateau, is by a staircase leading to the gate. This gate is so narrow that the sedan chair in which I was sitting, an ordinary armchair, could pass through only



**Figure 11.** Hilltop fortified village on Luang Island, 1913, by Wilhelm Müller-Wismar © MARKK / Dr. Wilhelm Müller-Wismar Gedächtnis-Stiftung.

with difficulty. There are two such gates in the stone wall that surrounds the whole stronghold.

Having squeezed through this entrance, one sees a street ahead, lined on both sides by high walls over which, upon my arrival, the heads of curious inhabitants fleetingly appeared, only to duck away again fearfully.

Behind those walls are the parts of the village which are separated again by stone barriers; and in order to be extra safe, everyone is also protected in the same way.

(de Vries 1900: 600)

Despite the fact that it appears to have had enormous regional influence (Pannell 2007), there is very little ethnographic or historical documentation of the Luang island group. No descriptions of traditional walled villages on the islands beyond that in Riedel (1886) has been located. Sandra Pannell (2007: 91) notes that the remains of traditional villages are still evident today as a series of multi-terraced, stone-walled compounds on hilltops. Wilhelm Müller-Wismar photographed one of these villages (Figure 11), but it is not known whether it was still inhabited at the time.

### ***Kisar and the northern arc of Barat Daya islands***

Kisar and the northern arc of Barat Daya islands (Roma, Damar, Teun, Nila and Serua) form a loose island chain in the southwest of the area under discussion. With the exception of Kisar, perhaps the other islands were considered more far-flung that have altogether less relevant historical documentation than the other places discussed thus far. Nonetheless, here too, we find clear, albeit limited descriptions of fortified villages.

As always, Riedel (1886) is helpful, explicitly stating, even for the remote Roma, Teun, Nila and Serua islands, that villages were fortified with stone walls. For the islands of Kisar and Damar, he provides more information including the local names of the walls:



**Figure 12.** Wulur village on Damar island enclosed by a stone wall visible behind villagers, 1900, taken as part of the Siboga Expedition. © University of Amsterdam Library.

The villages (*lete*) on Damar are built on the top of hills, ringed with stone walls, *lutur*, and governed by *lete* or chiefs and headmen. These chiefs have little influence, however; the heads of the individual houses or families do not permit meddling in their private disputes, which can lead to war.

(Riedel 1886: 463; my emphasis)

The old villages [on Kisar], in so far as they have not been destroyed, are ringed by stone walls 5 metres in height and 2-metre thick. These villages have thirty or more houses and are called *heruke lalaape* ‘big villages’, as distinct from the *heruke tataane* or temporary forts located on flat lands.

(Riedel 1886: 422)

Whilst Riedel suggests that fortified villages were in decline in 19th-century Kisar, they nonetheless remained prominent in the landscape. Jacobsen (1896: 118) notes that some hilltop villages still had walls at the end of the 19th century. In 1891 when Peter Bassett-Smith (1894: 136) visited Damar, the traditional pattern of village fortification was still practised with each village being ‘enclosed by dry-stone wall, having a wooden ladder for means of entrance and exit’. The Siboga zoological and hydrological expedition of 1899–1901 through eastern Indonesia photographed these stone walls around some villages on Damar (Figure 12). Pannell (1991) saw the remains of stone walls (*lutruni*) surrounding old villages on Damar, but made no mention of any particular cultural significance they may have had.

### Linguistic view on stone wall building<sup>4</sup>

The common pattern of village fortification found across southern Maluku is also reflected in language. In many of the descriptions presented earlier, the term *lutur*, or similar, is

<sup>4</sup>This section is a shortened version of the discussion of historical linguistic methodology and its application to #lutuR in Schapper (forthcoming).



used for this protective stone wall. In this section, I apply historical linguistic methodology to throw light on the history of the term #lutuR and in turn of the stone building.<sup>5</sup> The linguistic evidence points to stone wall building as having diffused across southern Maluku, including far eastern Timor.

The known instances of the term #lutuR are plotted in Figure 13.<sup>6</sup> These can be clearly divided into regional blocks on the basis of differences in semantics. In the western half of Timor and the islands to its north, members of the #lutuR set are verbs meaning to pile or stack up stones. In central Timor, members of the #lutuR set are nouns typically glossed as ‘fence’, but the items appear to denote any kind of constructed barrier demarcating portions of land. In the east of Seram, one language, Seram-Laut has *lutur* for ‘stone or coral fish trap’ (Ellen 2003: 163). Finally, across a dozen languages in southern Maluku we find members of the #lutuR set denoting walls made of piled up stones, in some cases, specifically or especially, those around villages.

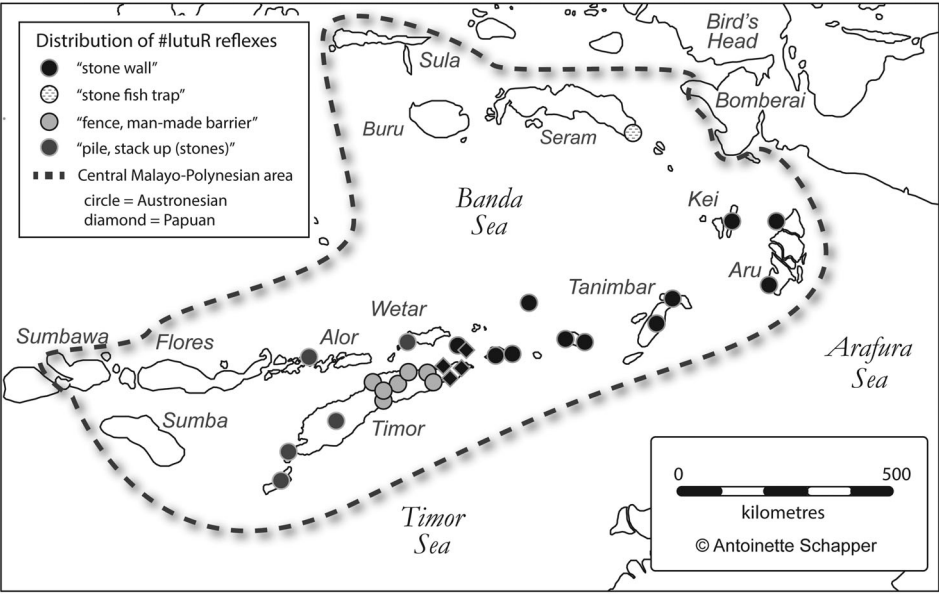
With this last meaning, #lutuR is found in two unrelated families: Austronesian languages, a large family extending from Taiwan in the north to Madagascar in the west and Hawai’i and Easter Island in the east (Blust 2009), and the eastern members of Papuan languages belonging to the Timor-Alor-Pantar family which is limited to south-east Wallacea (Schapper et al. 2014). Given that these families have no relationship with one another other than areal, this points to #lutuR as having been borrowed. The direction of borrowing here is almost without doubt from the Austronesian languages into the Papuan languages. Instances of #lutuR are not found in the related Papuan languages of central Timor or Alor-Pantar, but rather, are limited to those of eastern Timor and Kisar, adjacent to Austronesian languages giving evidence of #lutuR with the same sense (a point returned to below). To demonstrate that the term goes back to the common ancestor of the Papuan languages, we would need to find an instance of #lutuR in one of these other languages which form distinct primary subgroups of the family (Schapper 2017). The eastern Timor Papuan groups are, moreover, known to have adopted many cultural categories and associated vocabulary items from Austronesian society (McWilliam 2007).

Yet, because #lutuR is not found outside of southeast Wallacea, we cannot account for it simply as a borrowing of an Austronesian etymon into Papuan languages. All the Austronesian languages outside of Taiwan share a common ancestor known as Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PMP). There is a significant body of work on the history of Malayo-Polynesian languages, and an extensive vocabulary has been reconstructed for PMP. In the domain of wall building, Table 1 gives the relevant reconstructions of PMP lexical items. Noticeably absent from this list is #lutuR, and its reflexes are set out in Tables 2, 3 and 4 according to semantics. There are two possibilities to account for the regional distribution of #lutuR in Austronesian languages: inheritance or diffusion.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>In this section, the symbol # marks a word that is not a reconstruction, but rather a generalisation across forms in an etyma set. The symbol \* is reserved for words that are truly reconstructable to a proto-language on the basis of the comparative method.

<sup>6</sup>In compiling this data, I looked through sources and dictionaries from the region. This included many languages from the Nusa Tenggara Timur area that ultimately did not evidence a #lutuR word, e.g. Pampus (1999) on Lamaholot in the Solor archipelago, Onvlee et al. (1984) on Kambara on Sumba, Verheijen (1967) on Manggarai in western Flores.

<sup>7</sup>There is a third logical possibility, chance similarity. However, this is not considered here as the combined lexical and semantic similarities of the forms in Tables 2, 3 and 4 are clearly beyond chance.



**Figure 13.** Distribution of the term #lutuR in southeast Indonesia.

**Table 1.** Proto-Malayo-Polynesian reconstructions around walls and their building (Blust, ACD).

* <b>pager</b>	enclosure; palisade around a village; fence around a planted tree or cultivated field
* <b>qalad</b>	fence, wall
* <b>qatuR</b>	pave with stones; pile or stack up, arrange, order, put in sequence
* <b>susun</b>	stack up, pile in layers

**Table 2.** Austronesian languages with #lutuR ‘stack, pile up stones’.

Language	Form	Meaning
Ili’uun	<b>lutu(r)</b>	pile up (Josselin de Jong 1947: 125)
Kedang	<b>lutur</b>	heap, pile, stack up, pile stones on something (Samely and Barnes 2013: 383)
Termanu	<b>lutu batu</b>	pile up stones, especially under a tree to make a resting place; a heap of piled up stones (Jonker 1908: 335)
Helong	<b>lutanj</b>	pile up (Jonker 1908: 335)
Uab Meto	<b>lutu mbatu</b>	pile up stones (Middelkoop n.d.)

Inheritance would mean that this lexeme was innovated in a common ancestor to all the languages. Austronesian languages in this area have been claimed to all belong to the Central-Malayo-Polynesian (CMP) subgroup (Blust 1983–84, 1993) and the term could be traced back to Proto-Central-Malayo-Polynesian. The CMP subgroup putatively takes in all Austronesian languages in the Minor Sundic Island Chain, east of Bima, spoken on the eastern half of Sumbawa, together with all of the islands of central and southern Maluku. Members of the #lutuR set are, however, not in evidence across the whole proposed CMP area. Rather, they are limited to the southern arc of islands. And within this arc, languages reflecting #lutuR belong to a range of different primary subgroups of CMP that are not thought to be related to one another below PCMP.

**Table 3.** Austronesian languages with #lutuR ‘fence, man-made barrier’.

Language	Form	Meaning
Tetun	<i>lutu</i>	hedge, fence, enclosure, circular mud wall (Morris 1984: 135)
Tokodede	<i>luto</i>	fence (Capell 1944: 332–333)
Kemak	<i>lutu</i>	fence (Capell 1944: 332–333)
Mambae	<i>luto</i>	fence (Capell 1944: 332–333)
Dadu’a	<i>lutu</i>	hedge, fence (Penn 2006: 98)
Waima’a	<i>Putu</i>	fence (Belo et al. n.d.)
Naueti	<i>ʔlutu</i>	fence (Veloso 2016: 135)

**Table 4.** Austronesian languages with #lutuR ‘stone wall’.

Language	Form	Meaning
Kei	<i>lutur</i>	stone, e.g., <i>entut lutur</i> ‘stack up a wall’ (Geurtjens 1921b: 103)
Ujir	<i>lutur</i>	piled up stones, traditional fort (Handoko 2016: 170)
	<i>luti</i>	stone wall, to pile up stones (Emilie T.B. Wellfelt pers. comm.)
West Tarangan	<i>lutur</i>	(archaic) stone fence, wall, to cover with stones (Rick Nivens pers. comm.)
Fordata	<i>lutur</i>	stacked wall (Drabbe 1932a: 69)
Yamdena	<i>lutur</i>	‘wall of stacked up stones’ (Drabbe 1932b: 65)
Babar	<i>lutur</i>	stone wall [...] 2–3 m in height, up to 2 m thick (Riedel 1886)
Central Marsela	<i>lutur</i>	stone wall around a village (Toos van Dijk pers. comm.)
	<i>lukra</i>	stone wall around the garden (Toos van Dijk pers. comm.)
Damar	<i>lutur</i>	circular stone wall (Riedel 1886)
	<i>lutruni</i>	village wall (Pannell 1991: 80)
Wetan	<i>lutri</i>	wall, especially the stone or coral wall around the village (de Josselin de Jong 1987: 229)
Luang	<i>lutru</i>	stone wall [...], 2–2.5 m high and 2 m thick (Riedel 1886)
Leti	<i>lutur ~ lutru</i>	stone wall (Aone van Engelenhoven pers. comm.); wall of a village, fort (Jonker 1932: 144)
Kisar	<i>lukur</i>	stone wall, including protective village walls and field garden boundaries (John Christiansen pers. comm.)

**Table 5.** Papuan languages with #lutuR ‘stone wall’.

Language	Form	Meaning
Fataluku	<i>lutur(u)</i>	any kind of construction involving the stacking of stones, including village and garden walls, dance places and graves (Aone van Engelenhoven pers. comm.)
Oirata	<i>lutur(e)</i>	village wall (de Josselin de Jong 1937: 253)
Makalero	<i>lutur</i>	stone wall, including village walls and garden walls (Juliette Huber pers. comm.)
Makasae	<i>lutur</i>	stone wall (Juliette Huber pers. comm.)

The clustering of the different senses of #lutuR into geographic areas rather than according to subgroups further suggests areal diffusion is a significant factor for understanding the distribution of #lutuR. For example, the central Timor languages (i.e. Tokodede, Kemak and Mambae), which according to Hull (1998) form the ‘Ramelaic’ subgroup distinct from the other Austronesian languages of Timor, nevertheless use #lutuR in the same way as their nearest ‘extra-Ramelaic’ neighbours in the eastern half of Timor (e.g. Galoli, Waima’a, Naueti), that is, in the sense of ‘fence, constructed barrier’. The area rather than genealogy of these different semantic clusterings is also seen across familial boundaries. In Table 5 we see that the semantics of #lutuR terms in the eastern Timor Papuan languages conform with those of the neighbouring Austronesian languages in the southern Maluku region where village fortification was prevalent. This likely reflects adoption of the term for stone wall building from that area.

An examination of sound correspondences likewise indicates that #lutuR has been borrowed across the Austronesian languages in the region often with the specific sense of a stone wall fortifying a village. Particularly telling in this respect is the appearance of doublets, two reflexes of the ultimately same ancestral word acquired through different historical routes. In Ujir, we find the doublet *lutur* meaning a stone wall fortification (Handoko 2016) and *luti* which can be a noun meaning ‘stone wall’ or a verb ‘to stack up stones’ (Emilie Wellfelt pers. comm.). Word final PMP \*R is regularly reflected as /i/, as in Ujir *rengai* ‘hear’ < PMP \*deŋeR; the presence of a final /r/ therefore marks Ujir *lutur* as irregular and marks it out as borrowed. By contrast, *luti* looks to be regular, with the loss of unstressed /u/ before /i/ expected. Central Marsela has a similar doublet: *lutur*, denoting a protective stone wall around a village, is irregular, with PMP \*t having /k/ as its regular reflex in the language (e.g., (wo)kel ‘three’ < PMP \*telu), and indicates that the idea of fortifying villages with a stone wall was diffused from elsewhere; *lukra*, denoting a stone wall around the garden, by contrast, shows the expected sound change of PMP \*t > /k/ and may be inherited or (seeing as the final /a/ is unexplained) at least borrowed at an earlier stage than *lutur*, before the \*t > /k/ sound change took place. Thus, in both Ujir and Central Marsela, the word *lutur* shows clear signs of borrowing in the specific sense of stone wall used for fortification.

By no means all languages with an instance of #lutuR show irregular sound correspondences. However, regularity does not rule out an item from being a borrowing. Borrowings can show regular correspondences where the sounds they contain are stable, as the consonants \*l, \*t and, to a lesser extent, \*R tend to be in Austronesian languages in the area under consideration. A pertinent example is Otto Dempwolff’s (1938) reconstruction Proto-Austronesian \*kuTa ‘fortress’; reflexes of this item in Austronesian languages conformed to the established sound correspondences, even though it was known to be a borrowing from Sanskrit that diffused across insular Southeast Asia through Malay. That some of the Austronesian reflexes of #lutuR particularly in the semantic set ‘stone wall’ show irregularities and that this form-meaning pairing is clearly borrowed into the neighbouring Papuan languages in eastern Timor indicates that the practice of building stone walls, including ‘to fortify villages’, diffused across southern Maluku.

### The southern Maluku village fortification pattern

As shown earlier, there is a common pattern of traditional fortified settlement across southern Maluku, that of villages located on hilltops and/or cliff edges encircled by high stone walls with narrow gated entrances. These entrances were usually hidden and only accessible by steep ladders or stairwells that could be dismantled, barricaded and/or booby-trapped in times of danger. Across the region, these protective stone walls were made of rough blocks of coral stacked to several metres high, often extended in height by bamboo palisades and dotted with holes through for positioning rifles to shoot at enemies. Within villages, numerous smaller walls were frequently present to prevent an invading enemy from storming the village too easily. The villages fortified by these stone walls existed within the context of a highly fragmented political landscape in which the many small polities were in a state of near perpetual warfare with one another. The protecting stone walls held an important place in society offering substantial



protection against indigenous forces. They were widely treated by villagers as living entities, provisioned with food and clothing.

Fortifying a village with walls of piled up stone is not a radical technological innovation. Stone fortifications were common across the Indonesian archipelago in the early modern period, even if walled villages were not common. What stands out in southern Maluku is that stone walls fortifying villages were the rule rather than the exception. This contrasts with, for instance, the neighbouring central Maluku region (Ambon, Seram, Buru and many smaller islands) where we do not find such a pattern. Knaap (2002: 265) writes that stone fortifications were uncommon in the central Maluku region in the 16th century:

Most villages, either inland on Seram or on the coast of the smaller islands, were not enclosed by wood palisades or stone walls. There were only a few exceptions to this. Sometimes these exceptions were in places where there were strong central states; these were the places where leaders were seated.

Also distinct is the fact that it was not a leader's stronghold or larger urban communities that were being protected by the stone fortifications in the southern Maluku area. Reid (1993: 88) connects the appearance of stone walls across Southeast Asia to European aggression against the new urban centres:

City walls spread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the rapid growth of cities and the need to defend them against European naval attack. ... These walls might protect, or partly protect, the core area central to royal interests, but most urban growth occurred outside them.

By contrast, we have seen that it was whole villages, large and small, significant and marginal, that were encompassed by stone walls in southern Maluku.

The common vocabulary which is used across southern Maluku similarly sets the fortifications apart from those elsewhere in Indonesia; #lutuR in the sense of 'stone wall' is used across the whole of the region, whereas elsewhere in Maluku we find borrowings from western Indonesia are used for stone walls (e.g. Malay *benteng*, ultimately from Min *hôngsêng*; Malay *kota*, ultimately from Sanskrit *koṭa*). Riedel (1886), for example, describes similar village fortifications in the Seram Laut islands to those in southern Maluku, but not under the name #lutuR:

In former times the villages [on Seram and Gorom], *wan u*, and hamlets, *etar*, were built inland on the tops of mountains. Today there are still a few hilltop villages, but the majority are found on the flat land along the coast, in the vicinity of a river, stream, or spring. The residences of kings and chiefs are for the most part surrounded by coral stone walls (*pentang*) about three metres in height.

(Riedel 1886: 159; my emphasis)

Around most villages [of the Watubela Islands], however, there are still remnants of old stone walls, or rather stacked up coral stones, called *koto*, a metre thick and two metres high. In times of war these are restored, and caltrops are planted in front of them.

(Riedel 1886: 200; my emphasis)

These terminologies as well as other borrowings are also found in West Timor and other parts of what is today Nusa Tenggara Timor (e.g. Uab Meto *kot* 'fort'; McWilliam 1996:

142), as well as in the languages of the trading states of South Sulawesi (e.g., Makasarese *benteng*, *kota*, *lodji*; Cense 1979: 932).<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, the linguistics makes clear that the practice of building stone walls used in the fortification of villages spread across southern Maluku including into eastern Timor. Instance of the term #lutuR in the sense of ‘stone wall’ has diffused from language to language, as well as across the boundaries of the Austronesian and Papuan language families in the region, and shows through recurrent irregularity in sound correspondences a pattern of borrowing between the Austronesian languages.

In sum, the historical and linguistic evidence strongly suggests that the southern Maluku village fortification pattern was an indigenous development with its own terminology, that was, at least in part, distinct from settlement and fortification practices elsewhere in the neighbouring regions.

### Dating village fortification in southern Maluku

In this section we look at the evidence for when fortification of villages in southern Maluku took place. The absence of historical material before the 17th century and the limited archaeological investigation of fortifications in the region make pinning down the timing of the southern Maluku fortifications difficult, but there is enough evidence to posit with reasonable certainty that construction of stone walls around villages had already begun in much of the region by the mid 17th century.

The one area of the southern Maluku for which we have a relatively clear picture of in the 17th century, thanks to a series of detailed descriptions in the Dutch archives, is the west coast of Aru. The first recorded landing of Europeans in Aru was in 1623 when the *Pera* and *Arnhem* under the command of Jan Carstenszoon were sent from Banda to, among other things, establish friendly relations with Kei and Aru. In his report, on touching the west coast of Aru (van Dijk 1859), Carstenszoon gives a colourful account of Aru and its people. Particularly noteworthy for our purposes is his observation of the lack of fortification of settlements:

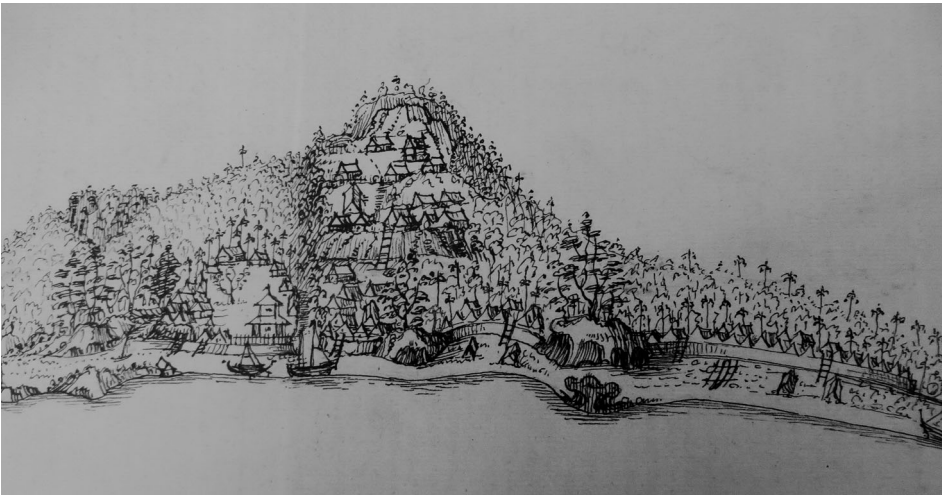
The islands are well inhabited, as far as we could inform ourselves, with more than 50 villages; the houses stand on great wooden posts (out of fear of being captured by their neighbours); there are a few [villages] which could offer up 400 to 500 men for war, but [they] have **absolutely no forts or defences**.

(van Dijk 1859: 5, my emphasis)

Just 25 years later in 1646, Adriaan Dortsman was sent from Banda to encourage trade and note the resources of Kei, Tanimbar and Aru (Heeres 1896a, 1896b). The preacher Jacob Vertrecht accompanied Dortsman and recorded the presence of stone fortifications around two villages on the Aru west coast: ‘we] sailed to the village of Fangabel, which lay about half a mile north-west of Wokam on a flat beach, [and came to a stop] before the fortification of piled up stones, just as in Wokam ...’ (Heeres 1896b: 699). For Ujir, the village which is later distinguished by its fortifications in the 18th century war with the Dutch, however, Vertrecht is explicit that the village was ‘without any kind of fortification of stacked stone’ (Heeres 1896b: 701). In short, the west of Aru had started fortifying its villages by 1646, though the significant fortifications of Ujir were yet to be built.

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<sup>8</sup>Duggan and Hägerdal (2018: 165) explicitly link a fort on Savu, a small island between Timor and Sumba, to foreign influence and perhaps even foreign builders.



**Figure 14.** Selection of the drawing 'Depiction of the south-south-west end of the island of Tanimbar with its four villages, Ouwer, Romeaen, Romomor and Ivenoer, in between which the lodge is situated and the bay where our fleet was anchored during the east monsoon, well protected from the heavy seas' © Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 1159

Neither Dortsman nor Vertrecht mention fortification of villages elsewhere in their accounts of southern Maluku. However, the manuscript of the Dortsman's journal includes sketches of some places visited, revealing that fortifications were more widely distributed than the written description of the voyage makes clear.<sup>9</sup> Most notable among these is a sketch of the villages on the southwest coast of Yamdena in the Tanimbar islands showing prominent walls and long ladders for scaling them such as those described much latter (Figure 14). This figure shows that village walls were well established in Tanimbar in 1646.

The only region involved in the southern Maluku fortification pattern that has seen excavation by archaeologists and for which radiocarbon dating is available is in eastern East Timor. O'Connor et al. (2012) analyse the known radiocarbon dates from fortified settlements in eastern Timor. These indicate that it was between 1550 and 1750 that fortified occupation sites became widespread. The authors note that two early dates indicating occupation from around 1300 do not necessarily represent the timing of fortification; sites may have been occupied but unfortified, with walls and other fortifications being constructed later in time. Indeed, the only radiocarbon date taken from directly below a fortified site wall has a relatively late calibrated date range of AD 1658 to 1805. These relatively large calibrated age ranges are typically of radiocarbon dates from the period after

<sup>9</sup>While several documents relating to the voyages of Dortsman have been published by Herres (1896a, 1896b), Dortsman's journal, *Dachregister van 't voorgevallene op de voijagie van den oppercoopman Adriaan Dortsman naar Amboina, Banda en de z. o. eijlanden sedert November 1645 tot Augustus 1646* [Chronicle of the events occurring on the voyage of Adriaan Dortsman to Ambon, Banda and the southeastern Islands from November 1645 to August 1646], and the associated sketches have only been published in excerpts. In Herres (1896b), extensive footnotes quote from Dortsman's journal. Several drawings and maps from the manuscript are published in Diessen (2006, vol 3). Unfortunately, it appears that the Nationaal Archief may have misplaced the original archive piece VOC 1159; several requests to view the volume have been declined without explanation. Other sketches from the volume may make clear that fortifications were in place in other parts in southern Maluku.

1500 and tend to be due to fluctuations in the radiocarbon calibration curve during this period. Despite these uncertainties, a start date for fortification in the first half of the 17th century aligns well with the archaeological evidence that is available.

## Drivers of village fortification in southern Maluku

Summarising the historical and linguistic evidence, I maintain that the distinctiveness of the southern Maluku village fortification pattern indicates that it was an autochthonous social development. However, the fragmentary, but consistent evidence that village fortification began in the early 17th century and was in full swing by the mid 17th century in southern Maluku, compels us to consider the activities of Europeans in the region as a possible driver. For elsewhere in Indonesia, scholars accept that the construction of forts in urban centres from the 16th century was a direct result of European aggression. It is unlikely that southern Maluku underwent fortification in the same period as an entirely independent development.

The fact that the building of fortifications in eastern Timor coincided with the arrival of Europeans is recognised by O'Connor et al. (2012). They argue that European-influenced social changes from the mid 16th century could have given rise to conflict, necessitating the building of fortified settlements. McWilliam (forthcoming) elaborates on O'Connor et al. (2012) and provides further historical discussion around the proposed social factors that may have initiated and reproduced fortification in eastern Timor. He argues that the most significant impacts on Timorese social relations and livelihoods were felt from a boom in sandalwood trading from the late 16th century, population growth arising out of the introduction of maize as a staple food crop in the same period, the new trade in firearms and a significant increase in slave trafficking. Whilst admitting that the impact on these events on local groups in Timor cannot be tracked with precision, McWilliam (forthcoming) suggests that they may well have promoted fortified settlement strategies.

These arguments lose much of their plausibility, however, when the fortification trend is seen not as particular to eastern Timor, but as part of a much wider regional pattern encompassing southern Maluku as well as far eastern Timor. The names given to stone walls in the Papuan languages of far eastern Timor where fortified villages are found were borrowed from Austronesian languages on the neighbouring southern Maluku islands, indicating that fortification was itself adopted from southern Maluku. Yet, the agriculture and subsistence patterns of this area were quite different from those of Timor. The staple across southern Maluku was sago alongside a range of tuber crops. Maize was not a significant crop in most of southern Maluku and so cannot have precipitated a population boom which saw an intensification in territorial warfare there. Similarly, southern Maluku was not a source for sandalwood, and it seems unlikely that a trade in beeswax would alone drive fortification.<sup>10</sup> The impact of the remaining two factors, a new trade in firearms and an increase in demand for slaves, is difficult to determine. McKinnon (1991: 7) questions whether warfare in Tanimbar was really exacerbated by the increased weaponry of the colonial powers, writing that:

<sup>10</sup>Several southern Moluccan islands were known for their beeswax, in particular Wetar (see Hägerdal 2019, this issue). However, beeswax seems to have been more in demand among local groups than European traders. The 17th century sources quoted by Hägerdal (2019) also indicate that beeswax was a trade product among indigenous groups. Kolff (1828) also notes that vessels from Aru, Ambon and Banda would travel to the island of Roma to buy wax and honey.

from early accounts and from accounts of contemporary Tanimbarese, one perceives that intervillage warfare was a persistent fact of life in the islands. Wars or, perhaps more properly, headhunting raids could be instigated by disputes concerning rights over land and reefs, or by disputes relating to intervillage thefts, adultery, murder or insults.

Rather than seeing specific European introductions or extractive practices as driving fortification, my suggestion is that increased uncertainty and elevated fear surrounding the VOC's militant pursuit of commercial hegemony in Maluku may have triggered an intensification of village fortification from the early 16th century. We may even speculate on a specific triggering event, namely, that the 1621 Banda massacre sent shock waves through Maluku as the Bandanese survivors fanned out across the Maluku islands. The Dutch conquest of Banda has rightly been seen as a historical turning point in that it marks the start of overt colonial rule by the VOC, in place of trading partnerships with indigenous peoples in the East Indies. The unfolding events on Banda in 1621 have been worked over by numerous scholars (e.g. Chijs 1886; Kiers 1943; Hanna 1978) and will be recapped here briefly. After a series of treaty violations by the Bandanese people, the newly appointed VOC governor-general Jan Pieterszoon Coen assembled a force with the purpose of finally establishing a Dutch monopoly over the nutmeg trade of Banda. On 21 February 1621, Coen arrived with his fleet and landed on Banda Neira where the Dutch were based in Fort Nassau. Within a few days they had also seized control of the large settlements on Lontor. In the process of taking Lontor, many Bandanese were killed, and once they had capitulated, the islanders were tortured and 40 of their *orangkaya* (local chief) publicly beheaded. Bandanese survivors were either enslaved and sent to Batavia or fled seeking refuge amongst their traditional trading partners and allies in Kei, Aru and Geser-Gorom. Most notably, there are two villages in Kei, today Eli and Elat, which were established by those exiled from Banda, and still speak the Bandanese language (Collins and Kaartinen 1998). The exact number of Bandanese people killed and exiled is unknown, but the overall population of Banda was so depleted that the workforce had to be restocked with slaves (Loth 1995).

Surprisingly, there is no study to date on the role of the exiled Bandanese people in Maluku in the decades after 1621 or on the ramifications of the Dutch slaughter.<sup>11</sup> There are, however, numerous suggestions in archival records that for many years after 1621, Bandanese exiles and their descendants remained a thorn in the side of the VOC. For example, Johann Sigmund Wurffbain, a German in the service of the VOC in Banda, reported that while visiting a village in Seram for friendly trade in 1635, the VOC admiral Balthasar Wintgens was attacked and killed on the order of the village's *orangkaya* 'who were convinced to do it by the exiled Bandanese who are the sworn enemies of the Dutch and who live in theses villages of Seram' (Wurffbain 1686: 84). Another ten years later, the possibility of Bandanese revenge is present in reports from Banda. For instance, on 24 May 1644 from the *Daghregister uit het Casteel Batavia* records: 'There [on Scham] the exiled Bandanese lurk with the intention of avenging the losses they suffered ...' (Colenbrander 1902: 111). The exiled Bandanese people made new powerful allies that were of great concern to the Dutch. In 1624, the VOC

<sup>11</sup>Loth (1995) provides a useful summary of the historiography of Banda. He did look at the relevant period, but focused on the new, transformed Bandanese society that constituted itself in the first generation after the conquest of 1621. Unfortunately, the thesis, on which Loth (1995) was meant to be an interim report, appears never to have been completed. Kaartinen (2010) studies contemporary history making amongst the descendants of Bandanese exiles in Kei.

noted that '[the Ternate people] have entered into an alliance with our enemies from Seram and the exiled Bandanese, and have sworn each other the utmost loyalty and, come what may, to come to the aid of their great friends' (Coolhaas 1960: 139). The Dutch saw this alliance as part of a larger plot to convert peoples on Buru, Ambelau and the western parts of Ambon and Seram to Islam and then turn them against the Dutch. The return of the Bandanese people to the Banda Islands was also a possibility still troubling the Dutch stationed in Banda more than a decade after the massacre. This fear caused the Dutch to reopen garrisons on the western islands of the Banda group in 1633. The rationale behind this decision is set out in the *Daghregister* of 21 June 1633:

Because the islands [Ron and Rosengain] have been depopulated and the garrisons disbanded, [these islands] can become a place of shelter and rendezvous for all escaped slaves and Bandanese. The exiled Bandanese, reinforced by slaves escaped from Banda, could take up position on these islands and from there could plague us, causing great harm and damage to the citizenry of Banda.

(Coolhaas 1960: 384)

While the threat presented by those exiled from Banda appears to have been intermittent, a continual problem faced by the VOC was the expense at which the settlements in Banda were having to be provisioned from Ambon and Batavia. The traditional supply lines between Banda and the eastern islands of Kei and Aru had been severed with the expulsion of the Bandanese people. Voyages were undertaken to encourage trade with Banda. Just two years after the massacre in 1623, Jan Carstenszoon was commissioned to lead a voyage to New Guinea and tasked with encouraging people on Kei and Aru to come to Banda to trade. In Ujir, one of the foremost trading villages in Aru at the time, Carstenszoon encountered suspicion and mistrust which he put down to the influence of the Bandanese people in Aru. He describes the following encounter with the Ujirese *orangkaya*:<sup>12</sup>

On Thursday 2nd [February 1623], the aforementioned envoy and interpreter returned to the island with the instruction to stay there (one or both of them) in case the *orangkaya* proved too scared to come aboard; that day at noon an *orangbai* [a type of small boat] with three native boatmen approached my ship and the men came aboard, they had taken two of our men as hostages, having only partly understood our intentions as voiced by the interpreter, so we repeated our standpoint, expressing ourselves more elaborately, pointing out that, provided they show us true friendship and renounce the counsel of the banished Bandanese and people of Seram, they would be entitled to free trade relations with Amboina and Banda in return and could also count on the safe return of prisoners still alive on these islands, which appealed to them greatly ...

(van Dijk 1859: 6)

The voyage of Dortsman to southern Maluku in 1646 was another such endeavour to reopen trade lines, but the fear of the local peoples is still evident throughout the various accounts of the voyage. For instance, on arrival in Tanimbar, Dortsman describes the flight of the people from their villages:

... we landed on the eastern side of Tanimbar, upon which most of the inhabitants, particularly the women and children fled into the forest and to neighbouring islands, taking their

<sup>12</sup>My translation here is based on that of the 'Journael van Jan Carstensz. op de ghedaene reyse van Nova Guinea', in L.C.D. van Dijk (1859) <<https://www.kb.nl/sites/default/files/docs/carstens-translation.pdf>>



valuables with them, out of fear and dread of our naval power, the likes of which they had never seen before.

(Heeres 1896b: 637)

But one anecdote from this 1646 seems particularly telling of the indigenous concerns about Dutch activities. Johann Jacob Saar (1662), a German soldier in the service of the VOC, records being left behind on Aru by Dortsman with a group of other men for several weeks while the expedition went to Greater and Lesser Kei to purchase wood for a fort on Damar. He writes that he and the remaining men began felling trees to build a tower from which to watch for the fleet's return, but the local people feared this was the first step to building a fort on Aru. The Dutch were attacked, by people from Banda in Saar's account and by people from Aru incited by the Bandanese in preacher Vertrecht's account of the same incident, with the result that two were killed and two others wounded. Whatever the identity of the attackers, Dortsman puts the attack down to Bandanese agitation in his letter to the Council of India:

[the people in Aru] reported how a Javanese junk had arrived from Key a few days earlier with two Bandanese interpreters on board. These vengeful Bandanese had told the gullible inhabitants there that we [the Dutch] had overrun Tanimbar and built a fort on Kei [...] [and the Aru feared that] if we had conquered Kei, then Aru could not offer much resistance.

(Heeres 1896b: 643)

After the attack on the Dutch, Vertrecht records the suddenly hostile reception in Ujir, where they had just a few days prior been greeted warmly. The *orangkaya* of Ujir explained the lack of friendship now shown to the Dutch: '[he] protested his innocence, pointing out that Javanese and Malays had brought word from Kei that our people had built a fort at Elat, causing them to be scared of us ...' (Heeres 1896b: 705). Here we have a clear instance of the Bandanese people inciting fear in local populations around Dutch fort-building in southern Maluku. The evidence to connect this with indigenous fort-building is circumstantial, but compelling: the Ujir fortified their village not long after having witnessed what they believed to be Dutch attempts at military occupation of Aru. In doing so, the Ujir, once thought well protected by their sheltered position on an inlet, joined the drive to build stone walls for their villages that had begun in southern Maluku.

## Conclusion

The ruptured supply lines to Banda and the voyages attempting to restore them speak to a climate of fear surrounding the Dutch in southern Maluku in the aftermath of the 1621 Banda massacre. This in itself, however, does not explain the distinctiveness of the fortification practices and the unique terminology used to describe them in southern Maluku, or the persistence of the stone walls around villages into the 20th century. My argument is that fear around Dutch naval activities stoked by the Bandanese diaspora was a significant trigger for the fortification of villages in southern Maluku, but did not determine the specific architectural forms which the fortifications took, and did not continue to drive the fortification trend once it was established. The comparative analysis of #lutuR shows that the term could refer to stone structures of many kinds, including garden walls and ritual stone altars, such as are ubiquitous across the region. Although almost certainly inspired by the earlier European forts and their indigenous imitations elsewhere in



Maluku, the stone-walling of villages in southern Maluku was an extension of pre-existing local stone-building practices. As rumours of, and direct experience with, Dutch military power extended across southern Maluku, so did the innovative application of long-standing stone building practices. When one group built a wall around its village, neighbouring groups were prompted to protect themselves in a similar way. The endemic culture of warfare meant that military innovations were quickly copied, thus creating the particular concentration of stone village fortification we see in the historical records. The security offered by the village walls from endemic warfare meant that the fortifications remained long after the triggering threat had subsided.

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- Insuln, Glücks- und Unglücks-Fälle, seltsame Begebenheiten, auch remarquirte rare Gewächse, Bäume, Früchte, Thiere, Fische, Insecten, Berge, Vestungen, Nationen, Gewohnheiten, Aberglauben der Wilden, und viele andere Denckwürdigkeiten mehr; III. Seine Rück-Reise, der dabey erlittene grausame Sturm, und endlich glücklich erfolgte Ankunft in sein Vaterland, umständliche erzählet wird; Nebst einem vollständigen Register* [New and extended description of travels in the East Indies ...]. Erfurt: Johann David Jungnicol.
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